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The needling process produces a needlefelt having a high degree of fibre entanglement (comparable to woven ball-covering felts) and enables achievement of characteristics necessary for good wear and abrasion resistance without the excessive consolidation in conventional ball-covering needlefelts that leads to loss of flexibility (tending to faulty ball covering) and poor dynamic characteristics (making such balls unsuitable for professional use).

The invention is particularly applicable to the manufacture of championship-quality tennis balls.